

Effectiveness of Communication Strategies in Enhancing Stakeholder Participation, a Case of Uasin Gishu County Funded Projects, Kenya

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Abstract: This study sought to investigate effective communications strategies on stakeholder's involvement and made appropriate recommendations based on the findings of the study. The study was guided by the following research objectives: Examine communication strategies used to enhance stakeholder participation for county-funded projects, To evaluate communication systems structure supporting various communication strategies adopted by the county to enhance stakeholder participation and to assess the county-funded projects success in relation to past stakeholder participation. The study targeted both the project management team and the users of the projects identified. A sample of 228 composed of 30 management team and 198 project users formed the study population. The study used purposive sampling to select project management team, and simple random sampling employed to select the project users. These are individuals who benefit directly from the project. Primary sources and secondary sources of data were employed during the data collection process. The questionnaires and the interview schedules formed the main primary data collection instruments. The findings of the study indicated that formal organized meetings has enabled management team to devise strategies, make decisions and implement action and that projects with high stakeholder participation are never rejected by citizens. The overall regression model showed that communication system structures contributes much to the stakeholder participation by over 73.3% followed by communication strategies contributing by 34.2% and current projects contributing negatively by 18.1%. The regression results further showed that communication strategies has an effect on stakeholder participation with a beta coefficient of 0.342 ($p=0.000$). The research results rejected the null hypothesis that communication systems structures has no significant effect on stakeholder participation ($\beta=0.733$, $p=0.000$) and accepted the null hypothesis that success of project has no significant effect on stakeholder participation ($\beta= -0.181$; $p=0.120$). The study concluded that successful completion of construction projects is dependent on meeting the expectation of stakeholders and managing relationships with stakeholders, thus need for regular formal meetings between the contractor, project client and stakeholders. The study further concluded that public relations and communication department are very significant in project implementation. For the success of the project the study recommend that county projects ought to appreciate the digital way of communication since duration of passage of information affects implementation. The study further recommended that a clear communication policy is put in place so that project management and stake holders could have a basis of reaching to each other. The study finally recommended that the county development department put in place strategies such as communication structures including public relation department with qualified persons.

Keywords: Enhancing Stakeholder Participation, Effectiveness of Communication Strategies.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study:

Effective and efficient stakeholder communication strategies have been identified as a critical success factor in project management and performance. In the context of a collaborative project with multiple partners of differing backgrounds, skills and operating environments, the model of collaboration and the stakeholder communication strategies adopted are important for delivering the best outcomes for the project team and stakeholders. Often these core elements are given

cursory attention in the project design stage, however, if left unexamined, they can raise serious problems down the line as differing expectations and understandings of the project by team members, partners, or other stakeholders come to light. In a project set up the project manager ought to communicate more often. In pointing out project controls, monitoring, organizations various forms of communications are issued. There is internal external upwards and downwards communications within a project which must be managed well to achieve the project success. Stakeholder Communication strategies are plans for communicating information related to a specific issue, event, situation, or audience. They serve as the blueprints for communicating with the public, stakeholders, or even colleagues (Audra, 2006)

Globally, a well-executed project relies on effective communication. Most organizations especially in government funded projects, they employ stakeholder communication strategies to ensure the availability of accurate information for those involved in the project; facilitate the planning, coordination and implementation of action plans, influence the attitudes and behavior of stakeholder groups, and encourage and facilitate feedback and response mechanisms. For instance, in Malaysia, the stakeholder's communication strategies chosen will depend on the size and structure of the project. In smaller teams regular meetings, emails and informal contact may be sufficient. For larger teams the ability to rely on verbal contact is reduced and so the need for well documented communication increases. With a highly distributed project team or stakeholder group, the risk of misunderstandings, and people being left out of the loop, increases, and so a greater use of more formal communications methods is essential (Stoldt, 2012).

However, in Africa, different stakeholder groups require different forms of communication with a specific content that addresses their interests. Stakeholder participation in the establishment of project will involve a process where stakeholders collaboratively engage, as appropriate, in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of activities. (Stoldt G. et al, 2012). Project organizations should provide for public participation to enhance participatory democracy through the establishment objectives, where equity, reprehensively and the redress of the past imbalances is ensured in proper project management. The basic principles of successful performance are equity, efficiency, sustainability and representativeness. Before the process of establishing the proposed programmes, there is a need to engage the stakeholders on the proposals and business cases that the Department has developed. The processes to establish will be largely generic, influenced by what processes have already been undertaken in the project management, and its specific nature (Charles C. et al, 2012)

Boosting performance is a key concern for many African organizations (Charles C. et al 2012). Whilst studies have demonstrated that there are many factors influencing project productivity, including stakeholder motivation, infrastructure and government policies, it is clear that developing and implementing effective communication management techniques can help to improve performance in many project organization throughout Africa (Charles C. et al, 2012).

In Kenya, Counties have various ways of enhancing their stakeholder participation in projects although the ways vary from one county to another depending on the actual functions of the project within the county. Some counties like Elgeyo Marakwet through their county assembly have passed a legislation that guides community participation. Many other counties still consider advertising in the local dailies as sufficient form of communicating for public participations, this is done in a bid to improve the performance of the projects. An effective stakeholder communication strategy has emerged as the most important phenomenon in counties that enables project managers to harness the energies of all stakeholders to determine their strength and maximize productivity. The County Government Act of 2012 has dedicated a whole chapter on concept of community participation. Public Finance and Management Act also stresses need for public participation

Uasin Gishu County, just like many other counties 'has a lot of projects going on ranging from government funded, community funded and even donor funded ongoing. In these projects there are very many stakeholders involved who at one time or the other requires information on the same. Many problems like scope creep, cost overrun, schedule delays and clients' dissatisfaction due to the poor quality of managing stakeholder communication and their associated risks have always been cited informally by the stakeholders during many project closure meetings. It is against this background that the study will seek to investigate and propose the most productive stakeholder communication strategies that promote community participation and finally enhance performance of projects

Communication should never be one-way -either from the top-down or the bottom-up (Sally, J. 1999). Effective communication strategies involve two-way communication, or conversations, among members of the organization.

Projects whose managers successfully engage stakeholders in conversations about their work, their ideas and their perspectives on issues related to products, services, customers and the business environment develop a culture of inclusiveness that generates results. Through communication, project team members can perform better and express their emotions including disappointment or satisfaction with each other and with their management. A suggestion was made that future research should focus on task performance and related process outcomes, such as project communication. In the literature, communication satisfaction shows a relationship with performance (Sally, J. 1999).

The construct of communication satisfaction as presented by Laurie, K. (2011) showed that two main aspects of communication affect performance indicators, those aspects are relational and informational communication satisfaction. The relational factor of communication satisfaction responds on creating healthy relations between project manager and stakeholders, where the effective communication enhances mutual trust and confidence. Further, communication creates supportive relationship between project manager and stakeholders. The second factor is informational communication.

1.2 Statement of the Problem:

Ideally, for the success of any project, stakeholder involvement is key. Communication strategies in an organization can perform a critical role in ensuring a more participative approach to the same. Organizations consequently adopt a myriad of communication strategies to enhance their efficiency. Charles, (2006) argues that stakeholder communication is one of the parameters and tools that help in achieving participations levels that help project managers in leading the project to success. However, this study realizes that despite adequate acknowledgement of the importance of communication in promoting stakeholder participation, the literature does not help the project managers or county governments to develop a structured framework for stakeholder communication that would act as a universal tool in helping project managers handle stakeholders' communication effectively at both the county and national levels.

In the study of Mburugu (2005), he states that one of the main reasons for poor performance, low management morale and lack of management accountability in local authorities, is the pervasive tendency of politicians and ministries to issue directives rather than consultations among stakeholders.

Citing the Kenyan County Government Act No. 17 of 2012 and Public Finance Act 2014, recently two institutions in Eldoret town moved to court in March 2014 seeking the courts interventions to declare the county government of Uasin Gishu's Public Finance Act 2014 null and void for lacking public participation. They cited the fact that the citizens were not well informed and questioned the communication modes employed to relay the information.

This is a significant indication that the lack of stakeholder involvement in the process seeks to undermine project efforts. Studies in the process has in the past attempted to establish a correlation between the stakeholder involvement and communication but they have failed to shed sufficient light into the matter relating to what communication strategies can best influence stakeholder involvement in key projects in the country. For example a study by Mulisho (2010) on communication strategies, he noted that communication is key in any consultative process but it did not come up with what communication strategies would best influence the stakeholder involvement in any significant way. Consequently very little information exists on the communication strategies that can best influence the stakeholder's involvement.

This study examined and evaluated effective communication strategies on stakeholder's involvement and make necessary recommendations based on the findings of the study.

1.3 Research Objectives:

The main objective of the study was to examine the effectiveness of communication strategies in enhancing stakeholder participation in Uasin Gishu county funded projects.

The study was guided by the following specific objectives;

Establish communication strategies used to enhance stakeholder participation in Uasin Gishu County funded projects

To examine and evaluate communication systems structure supporting various communication strategies adopted by the county to enhance stakeholder participation

Assess the county funded projects success in relation to past stakeholder participation

1.4 Research Questions:

The study sought to answer the following questions;

What are the communication strategies used to enhance stakeholder participation in Uasin Gishu County funded projects?

What are the communication systems structure supporting various communication strategies adopted by the county to enhance stakeholder participation?

How is the county funded projects success in relation to past stakeholder participation?

1.5 Justification of the Study:

The study undertaking is justified by the fact that this stakeholder involvement in county-funded projects is key in ensuring that the views and interests of the greater public are represented in identification, implementation and monitoring of this projects. This would ensure that the projects developed are developed within the required budgets, within the stipulated time and in the right quality. This consequently would mean that the projects would go a long way to serve the interests of the community.

The study will be of significance to various stakeholders. Foremost, the stakeholders within the government funded, community funded and even donor funded projects will find the study useful and important not only in introducing effective stakeholder communication strategies for performance of projects but also for managing the projects.

The Kenyan Constitution of August 2010 (Chapter 8, Part 5 Article 118 Part 2 states, that 'county governments are supposed to ensure and ... the question of public participation remains critical to stakeholders) underscores the importance of stakeholders' participation and engagement. Through this research it is believed that strategies could be developed to realize that constitutional requirement, and it will also help county governments develop policy to guide in stakeholder communications on the many projects currently initiated.

The government policy makers, who include planners, will gain an understanding of the relationship between stakeholder's communication strategies and performance of projects. This will enhance the chances of not only meeting the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), but also the Vision 2030.

This study will make a significant contribution to the growing body of research knowledge on effective use of stakeholder communication strategies and the challenges facing the performance of projects. The findings may also be used as a source of reference by other researchers. In addition, academic researchers may use the study findings to undertake further research in this area and as such form a basis of good background for further researches.

1.6 Scope of the Study:

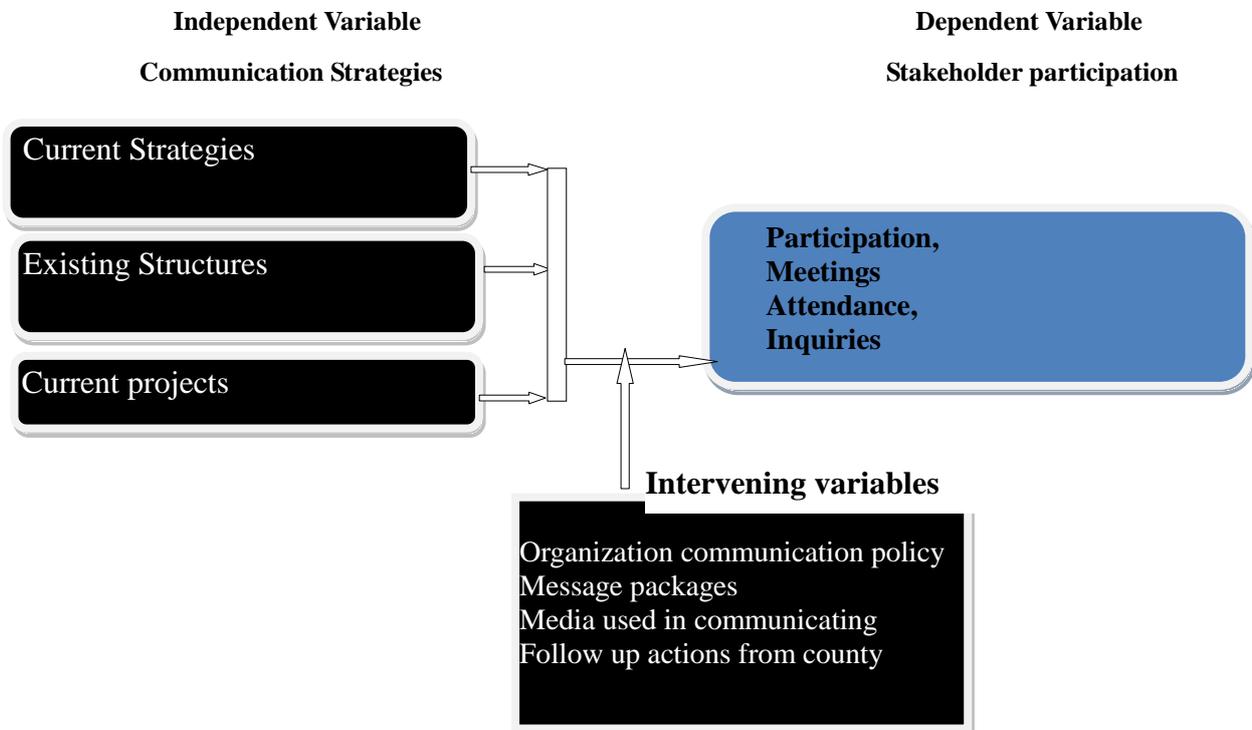
The study focused on the relationship between stakeholders' communication strategies and stakeholder's participation in county funded projects in the Uasin Gishu County Government. The study scope is selected because it is one of the counties in the countries whose development agenda has been keenly documented by interested parties and as a consequence the county records are clearly available on the county funded projects and the stakeholders participation on the same. Research respondents included Uasin Gishu County government project managers and identified project users. The study considered the projects time frames from June 2013 to June 2015.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW**2.1 Introduction:**

This chapter looks at the existing literature in investigations of communication strategies to promote stakeholder participation in projects in devolved governments. The chapter will cover the review of theories related to the study, studies done by other individuals, the conceptual framework, a critique of the existing literature, a summary of the chapter and the research gap that the study aims at addressing.

2.2 Conceptual Framework:

The conceptual framework illustrates the relationship between the dependent and the independent variable. The independent variable is the communication strategies while the dependent variable is the stakeholder participation



Source: Author's own compilation (2015)

Figure 1.1 Conceptual Framework

2.3 Theoretical Framework:

2.3.1 Circular Theory of Communication:

Circular Theory of Communication is used in this study to show how effective communication can be achieved. The study adopted Osgood and Schramm's circular theory of communication (Kolltveit, B. 2004). This theory is based on Shannon and Weaver's communication theory. Schramm also believes that the communication process should consist of a sender, channel and receiver (Kolltveit, B. 2004). However, Schramm explains that while one person is speaking, the other is listening. How this listening is done constitutes information for the sender. If a receiver frowns, that provides different information than if "he or she" smiles supportively. It is explained in this theory that recognizing the dynamics of interaction countered the tendency to communication as a linear progression of steps leading to or "causing" each following step. He understood that people respond idiosyncratically to messages as a function of their personality, group influences, and the situation under which the communication occurs (Kolltveit, B. 2004). In relation to the study, different communication strategies may not necessarily elicit the same responses rather different stakeholders may perceive and act on messages differently.

The process of the model is simple. In it, the sender and receiver function as both encoder and decoder of information. According to Underwood (2003) each functions as the interpreter of the message. This model explains that effective communication can be possible if both the receiver and the sender are capable of interpreting meanings out of the information being communicated. For instance, in the business context, the supervisor may mean well and believe that he is delivering the messages properly to the employees. However, because the employees have not been briefed earlier about a particular piece of information that plays an important part on what the supervisor communicated, they miss the point of what the supervisor tries to say. In return, the supervisor may interpret that the employees are still ignorant about a specific piece of information and still need further briefing, (Key, S. 1999)

This theory is relevant to the study in that for a project to perform it should develop effective communication between the project team members and stakeholders. The project manager should also brief the project team and stakeholders before performing any activity this will assist them perform better and with little supervision. Also adopting an effective communication where when an employer or a project supervisor speaks and the employees listen properly without interfering will enhance understanding and thus result to good cooperation.

2.3.2 Theory of Constraints (TOC):

According to Goldratt, organizational performance is dictated by constraints. These are restrictions that prevent an organization from maximizing its performance and reaching its goals. Constraints can involve people, supplies, information, equipment, or even policies, and can be internal or external to an organization.

The theory says that every system, no matter how well it performs, has at least one constraint that limits its performance this is the system's "weakest link." The theory also says that a system can have only one constraint at a time, and that other areas of weakness are "non-constraints" until they become the weakest link. You use the theory by identifying your constraint and changing the way that you work so that you can overcome it.

The underlying premise of theory of constraints is that organizations can be measured and controlled by variations on three measures: throughput, operational expense, and inventory. In the theory, throughput is the rate at which the system generates money through sales. Inventory is all the money that the system has invested in purchasing things which it intends to sell. Operational expense is all the money the system spends in order to turn inventory into throughput.

Before the goal itself can be reached, necessary conditions must first be met. These typically include safety, quality, legal obligations, etc. For most businesses, the goal itself is to make money. However, for many organizations and non-profit businesses, making money is a necessary condition for pursuing the goal. Whether it is the goal or a necessary condition, understanding how to make sound financial decisions based on throughput, inventory, and operating expense is a critical requirement.

Goldratt theory of constraint is much relevant to the study. This is because for a project to perform and accepted overwhelming by the user, the constrains identified should be properly solved. Constrains in human resource for instance where the project team members don't perform well as expected due to lack of experience should be replaced with more experience individuals who will perform faster and in an effective manner. Also making money is an objective of all project management and thus to realize this safety measures, quality undertakings and legal process argued by Goldratt theory is all what the management team should adopt.

2.4 Criticism of the Theory:

2.4.1 Circular Theory of Communication:

The circular theory of communication does not talk about semantic noise and it assumes the moment of encoding and decoding.

2.4.2 Theory of Constrains (TOC):

While TOC has been compared favorably to linear programming techniques, Trietsch from University of Auckland argues that its methodology is inferior to competing methodologies. Duncan says that TOC borrows heavily from systems dynamics developed by Forrester (1950) and from statistical process control which dates back to World War II. Noreen Smith and Mackey on the other hand, in their independent report on TOC, point out that several key concepts in TOC "have been topics in management accounting textbooks for decades."

2.5 Empirical Review:

2.5.1 Communication Strategies Used to Enhance Stakeholder Participation:

Communication involves all areas of social interactions, keeps people together, and helps to perfect organizational communication. Pavitt G. (1974) stated that communication satisfaction results of effective organizational communication in organizations and effective communication is a major part of supervisors' strategy for success. It facilitates supervisors to share data and information with subordinates in smooth and trust relationship. Likewise, communication satisfaction enables supervisors to facilitate strong and mutual relationship with subordinates effectively. Generally it builds and

improves confidence between them as well as strengthens trust and stewardship. It is indisputable that all supervisors call for effective communication to ensure subordinates participation in decision making, by means of providing essential information. Moreover, subordinates' efficiency of decision-making is improved based on healthy communication.

In relation to communication strategies, Kalbers, L. P (2008) argued that subordinates' communication satisfaction reinforce understanding of the role of communication practices and its relationship to overall satisfaction among other important factors. Hence, insufficient communication results in lack of sharing meaning between supervisor and subordinate, which could have irreversible consequences on task achievement. More often than not, management increase information flow to its employees in order to boost confidence and reduce employee uncertainties and result in employee communication satisfaction. Without doubt, effective communication enhances and augments understanding the organizational apparition. Indeed, effective supervisor needs adequate communication in order to disseminate the organizational vision, mission and objectives efficiently and effectively.

2.4.1.1 Computer-Mediated Communication:

The term "online communication" refers to reading, writing, and communication via networked computers. It encompasses synchronous computer-mediated communication (whereby people communicate in real time via chat or discussion software, with all participants at their computers at the same time); asynchronous computer-mediated communication (whereby people communicate in a delayed fashion by computer, using programs such as e-mail); and the reading and writing of online documents via the World Wide Web (Key S. 1999).

In the first period, dating from the mid-1980s, language educators began to discover the potential of computer-mediated communication for project performance and development (Cummins, 1986). The integration of computer-mediated communication itself divided into two paths: on the one hand, some educators began to use e-mail to set up long-distance exchanges, and, on the other hand, other educators began to use synchronous software programs (in particular, to allow computer-assisted conversation in a project execution (Key S. 1999).

Long-distance exchanges and computer-assisted conversation had overlapping, but distinctive, justifications. Both types of activities were seen to shift the focus from language form to language use in meaningful context and thereby increase student motivation. In addition, long-distance exchanges were viewed as brining about increased cultural knowledge from communication with native-speaking informants and making development projects more authentic and collaborative. Those implementing computer-assisted conversation emphasized the projects benefits which could be achieved from rapid written interaction, such as better opportunities to process and try out new lexical or syntactic patterns as compared to oral interaction (Jaafari, A. 2004)

2.4.1.2 World Wide Web:

World Wide Web is an international online database that allows the sharing of linked multimedia documents. These documents can be authored in a non-linear, layered and linked format, which is referred to as hypertext or hypermedia. The development and spread of the World Wide Web in the 1990s marked a second period in the use of online communication in language teaching. One the one hand, the Web allows additional modes of computer-mediated communication through Web-based chat rooms, bulletin boards, and discussion forums, thus making even more popular the kind of long-distance exchanges and computer-assisted conversation activities described above. In addition, the World Wide Web adds a new dimension to online communication and learning by allowing students to find and read online documents on a variety of topics from throughout the world and to author and publish similar documents to share with others (Sproull et al, 1986).

A growing body of empirical research has begun to examine the influence of electronic media on communication (Hill, C. 1992). One of the major conclusions is that e-mail communication encourages the flow of information in organizations outside formally authorized channels and hierarchies. Although still a controversial issue amongst experts (Hill, C. 1992), he suggests that e-mail allows for a certain level of "rich" communication, i.e. allows convey of some emotional, social, and contextual content (Hill, C. 1992). When applied to the particular context of virtual teams, communication has focused on the issue of trust in global virtual teams. He suggests that global virtual teams may experience a form of "swift" trust but such trust appears to be fragile and temporary. He suggested that "there is an interaction of time and

medium on formality such that, formality is different in initial CMC conversations, and formality decreases and converges in face to face and CMC after many message exchanges in both conditions". (Hill, C. 1992)

2.4.1.3 Formal Organized Meetings:

In order to be effective in conducting business or rendering service, county governments need to implement management procedures and practices that will yield the desired results. Under performance contracts, targets are set and although the areas of concern are the outcomes rather than the processes, the processes do determine the outcomes. One of the first things local authorities are required to do before entering into performance contract is to develop Strategic Plans. A strategic plan enables an organization to be better focused on its core business. It also helps the local authority to clearly set out its objectives and action plans that will enable it achieve the targets. In effect what the councils are called upon to do is to plan performance.

Face to face meetings have continuously been reported as essential to building bonds between the team and exploring the strengths, weakness and constraints of individual members. Teasing out and fully understanding the proposal, institutional cultural variations, different uses of terminology, and the nuances of interpretation, face to face, ensures many basic problems are dealt with at the start. Joint benchmarks should also be determined collaboratively at commencement. Investing initially in relationship building has also reportedly increased stakeholder buy in and made resolution of subsequent issues arising easier. (Hendry, J. R. 2005).

Managing and improving the performance of projects effectively is a skill that requires constant planning, meeting and development. A project manager can be defined as the person who is vested with formal authority over an organization or one of its sub units. He or she has status that leads to various interpersonal relations, and from this comes access to information. Information, in turn, enables the manager to devise strategies, make decisions, and implement action (Hendry, J. R. 2005). Management is concerned with the optimum attainment of organizational goals and objectives with and through other people. Project management organizations are characterized by many strategies, wide spans of control, democracy, and autonomy. Their management practices cannot be reduced to one standard set of operating guidelines that will work for all organizations continually. However, all managers of professional organizations face the same challenge: to manage one's time, objectives, and resources in order to accomplish tasks and implement ideas (Krackhardt D. et al, 1993).

According to (Yates J.A et al, 1999), there seems to be very little clear research on any link between formal strategic planning and overall organization/project performance among non-profit organizations. For our purposes we think of formal corporate strategic planning as a label to describe an organizational managerial process, which can be broadly defined as a set of procedures for setting long range quantified overall corporate objectives and of determining the strategies, and assignments of accountability, within policies that govern the acquisition and allocation of resources to achieve the fundamental purpose of the organization.

According to Williams (2004), performance is multi-faceted. It is measured in terms of output and outcome, profit, internal processes and procedures, organizational structures, employee attitudes and organizational responsiveness to environment among others.

2.4.1.4 Informal Meetings:

An informal meeting is a non-arranged meeting that is generally unplanned in advance. Members attending the meeting are not invited formally and usually the meeting takes place in a neutral environment such as a restaurant as opposed to a boardroom. Informal gathering of people is a meeting of which only the people meeting are aware about it. (Walther J.B., 1995) One difference between formal and informal meetings lies in the pre-planning involved. Formal meetings require more preparation. They usually will have a specific agenda that is followed. Also, invitees of formal meetings are generally giving a notice of the purpose and meeting time well in advanced. Informal meetings will typically be last-minute. They often will be the result of an emergency. Also, informal meetings will usually take place in a neutral and relaxed environment, such as a restaurant. The management of project stakeholders by taking into accounts their needs and requirements are an essential element of project success (Desouza C. 2003).

2.4.1.5 Posters, Newspapers and Public announcement:

Many counties use newspapers to inform the stakeholders on various developmental needs. The use of posters and public announcement using public address system are also common mode of stakeholder communications.

2.4.1.6 Communication Technology:

Information and communication technology can facilitate democratic processes and increase participation by citizens. Such impacts may occur as a result of greater communication and information dissemination offered by ICTs, through the use of social net-working sites, e-mail and mobile phones. They are also frequently enabled by electronic information and services offered by government (e-government), usually via the Internet or mobile phones. Of particular interest is how e-government can improve democratic processes and encourage citizen participation in decision-making (waither J. B, 1995).

According to Audra R. D. (2006) Project management needs to balance the diverse demands and claims of different stakeholders in their decision making process. A widely known stakeholder salience framework that has been proposed by Audra (2006) explains the process of managerial decision making. The salience framework classifies stakeholders according to three dimensions: power, legitimacy and urgency. These three attributes determine stakeholder salience as "the degree to which managers give priority to competing stakeholder claims in their decision making process," i.e. how much and which type of attention stakeholders receive from management.

2.5.2 Communication Systems Structures that Support Various Communication Strategies to Enhance Stakeholder Participation:

According to Adong, (2004). County structures have influence communication patterns to enhance performance of county governments. Communications flow in three directions downward, upward, and horizontally. Downward communication consists of policies, rules, and procedures that flow from top administration to lower levels. Upward communication consists of the flow of performance reports, grievances, and other information from lower to higher levels. Horizontal communication is essentially coordinative and occurs between departments or divisions on the same level. External communication flows between employees inside the organization and a variety of stakeholders outside the organization. Communication is not only an essential aspect of these recent devolved changes, but effective communication can be seen as the foundation of success of the county governments. Organizational communication in today's organizations has not only become far more complex and varied but more important to overall organizational functioning and success. In summary, organizational communication includes internal and external activities through formal and informal means, by which the process of communication occurs vertical, horizontal, or diagonal directions with various functions such as making sense, persuading, making decision, or solving problems (Almond, 1980).

Communication, whether in at the county level, politics or public information campaigns, is one of the most complex and strategic activities of human beings. It may have limited effectiveness for two interacting reasons. The first obstacle to effectiveness is the lack of congruence between the sender (source, persuader, and speaker) and the receiver (recipient, addressee, listener). As many contributions have emphasized, the latter is unlikely to trust the former's statement or recommendation if their interests diverge. The second obstacle is also widely recognized, but has not yet been embodied into economic modeling. The acts of formulating and absorbing the content of a communication are privately costly, and so communication is subject to moral hazard in team (Omondi,2008).

Communication helps staff in county governments and in other organizations and groups coordinate activities to achieve goals, and it's vital in socialization, decision-making, problem-solving and change-management processes. Internal communication also provides employees with important information about their jobs, organization, environment and each other. Communication can help motivate, build trust, create shared identity and spur engagement; it provides a way for individuals to express emotions, share hopes and ambitions and celebrate and remember accomplishments. Communication is the basis for individuals and groups to make sense of their organization, what it is and what it means. Brett (2002) has given the hierarchy of employees' communication needs.

Recent advances in information technologies provide employees the freedom to work from any place and at any time. Such temporal and spatial dispersion, however, threatens the very meaning of firms. Spurred by advances in information technologies, many organizations have begun experimenting with virtual ways of working. Included in these ways of

working are modes such as telecommuting, working from satellite centers, mobile work and the like. Indeed, in some organizations, it is no longer important when you work and where you work, as long as the work gets done (Munyasia, 1995).

These new organizational forms represent important shifts in the organization of work. For most of this century, large corporations have created mass-production systems that have required the congregation of organizational employees at central places of work. The advent of information technologies, however, has enabled a decentralization of work. Specifically, it is now possible for organization members to work together while being spatially and temporally decoupled from one another. For instance, salespeople can co-locate with their clients even as they access databases and their distant colleagues to accomplish their tasks. Others can isolate themselves in their homes or tele-centers to provide undivided attention to the completion of a task even as they remain connected with their work world through electronic means. Still others can work off their laptops even as they travel (Karugire, 1980).

Globally, research regarding the communication systems provides a theoretical link between communication and organizational identification. Specifically, research has found that communication can affect communication strategies. Studies done locally have proven that different communication media have different properties with respect to qualities of the media per se that is, the extent to which they contain social context cues and create a shared interpretive context and with respect to predictors of how the media will be used for example, the level of accessibility and level of informality that they provide. These properties, in turn, have important implications for the impact of particular communication modes on the strength of members' organizational identification. What one medium lacks in one dimension (for instance, the apparent paucity of social context cues in e-mail), it may make up in another (for instance, the high informality and accessibility of e-mail) (Karugire, 1980).

2.5.3 Relation between the County Funded Projects Success in Relation To Past Stakeholder Participation:

According to African Charter (1990), stakeholder participation is in essence, people's effective involvement in creating structures and designing policies and programmes that serve their interests. For popular participation to be realized, people have to be fully involved, committed and seize the initiative. It is essential that they establish independent people's organizations at various levels that are genuinely grass root, voluntary, democratically administered and self-reliant and that are rooted in tradition and culture of society (ibid).

Generally, the concept of participation refers to involvement of people in affairs that affect them especially in decision making process. In most of the literature, there is agreement that participation connotes a process by which community members take part in all stages of a programme right from inception, through planning and design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation, to sharing of benefits (Munyasia, Omondi (1995). proposes a framework for analyzing community participation in terms of three dimensions, namely its objectives, its intensity, and the instruments used to foster it. Paul states that the objectives of community participation as an active process are (a) empowerment, (b) building beneficiary capacity, (c) increasing project effectiveness, (d) improving project efficiency, and (e) cost sharing.

Adong (2004) points out that participation is assumed to have the effect of empowering the citizens so that they can continue to give direction in public policies or programmes and also direct future changes and put pressure on outside forces to support these changes. He argues that the location of participatory work is thus focused on the local level and depends upon local interests and capacity to engage in action for change for the success of the public policy or programmes.

According to Adong (2004), citizen participation in Kenya finds its early roots in development projects that benefited local communities. Throughout the post-colonial era, the country took legislative steps to provide ways for citizens to be active participants in the governing of their country. Most of these ways, however, were limited to local authorities and the implementation of laws incorporating citizen participation did not reach their full potential because citizens did not fully understand their rights or embrace the opportunity. Finally, local authorities struggled to promote local funding and planning processes to citizens, like the Local Authority Service Delivery Action Plan (LASDAP) and the Constituencies Development Fund (CDF). The Constitution provides a strong legal framework for citizen participation. The challenge will be to educate as many citizens as possible on these new rights and responsibilities and to provide them with tools to make valuable contributions to the governance process. This is why constitutional reforms, the establishment of county governments, and support for the full implementation of the Constitution are so important to the future of the nation.

Below are specific references to citizen participation in the Constitution. In terms of direct constitutional references to citizen participation in devolved government, Article 174(c) says that an object of devolution is to "enhance the participation of people in the exercise of the powers of the State and in making decisions affecting them." Article 184(1)(c) further requires that mechanisms "for participation by residents" be included in national legislation to urban areas and cities governance and management (Constitution of Kenya 2014).

Undoubtedly, few voices will rise against the idea that stands for the importance of public participation in a real democracy. During the last decades, certain aspects related to the participation, empowerment and involvement of the citizens in the policy or decision making process have raised fierce and heated debate.

Since the roll-out of county governments after the 2013 general elections, a section of Kenyan citizens have expressed dissatisfaction with the performance of the county governments. According to 'Is it my business? - a national opinion poll on devolution and governance' by Transparency International Kenya conducted and published in 2014, over half of the sampled citizens - 53% stated that they were dissatisfied with the county governments, 28% were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied and only 18% stated that they were satisfied (Karanja, 2003).

Devolution is one of the main drivers of the Constitution, and it is important for county governments to get concerned with the high levels of dissatisfaction amongst its citizenry. When asked the reason for their dissatisfaction, the main reason given was that there was no development yet - 54%, while 19% stated that there were unfulfilled campaign promises, and 13% stated the reason for discontentment as nepotism/ethnicity/corruption. This clearly indicates that county governments have not achieved the objects of devolution which are safeguarded in the Constitution. It also indicates that citizens are more aware of these objects, and have high expectations of the county government to enhance service delivery and set a development agenda (Karanja, 2003).

2.6 Research Gap:

There has been available data pertaining communication strategies to enhance stakeholder participation but there has been a considerable lack of data on the effectiveness of these strategies especially for development projects undertaken in rural areas especially at devolved movements that is still new in Kenya.

The concept of effectiveness of communication strategies has been investigated independently of county (rural) development projects by most scholars but challenges in practice have resulted in trying to establish how these strategies as an independent practice can contribute to stakeholder participation in the country.

It is this gap in knowledge that this study will aim to resolve by trying to determine the effectiveness of communication strategies in enhancing stakeholder participation in Uasin Gishu funded projects. The study will aim to make key contributions onto the components of stakeholder participation and how each of these components could help influence development projects. This knowledge in rural development will help solve already existing problems.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction:

This chapter contains the study design, target population of the study, sample design, data collection procedures and research instruments used and data analysis methods.

3.1 Research Design:

A research design is the specification of methods and procedures for acquiring the information needed. It is the overall operational pattern or framework of the project that stipulates what information is to be collected from which source by what procedures (Kuada, 2012). This study employed a survey research design to select project in Uasin Gishu County. Pinsonneault and Kraemer (2003) in their book define a survey as means for gathering information about the characteristics, actions and opinions of a large group of a target population .Survey therefore is simply a data collection system for carrying out research. The survey is going to be used because it is capable of obtaining information from larger samples of the target population within a short period of time. This research design was used because the researcher wants to collect the information from selected projects done by the County Government of Uasin Gishu.

3.2 Target Population:

Target population is the entire set of units for which the survey data is to be used to make inferences. It can also be defined as the eligible population that is included in research work, Kothari (2006). Kombo and Tromp (2006) define target population as the entire group a researcher is interested in; the group about which the researcher wishes to draw conclusions.

The target population for the study was the project management team and project Users for various projects. The study targeted only 3 projects done by the county government of Uasin Gishu. These included renovation of Kipchoge Keino, construction of Eldoret town Market and construction of market road. 30 project management team and 198 project users were identified after carrying out intensive analysis. The target population for the study comprised of a total of 228 respondents

Table 3.1 Target Population

Respondents	Target population
Project Management team	30
Project Users	198
Total	228

Source: County Development Projects Office (2015)

3.3 Sample Size and Sampling Procedure:

Sampling technique is the procedure a researcher uses to gather people, places or things to study. The study employed purposive sampling to pick the project management team and simple random sampling to select the users of the project. Sampling is that part of statistical practice which concerns the selection of individual observations intended to yield some knowledge about a population of concern, especially for the purposes of statistical inference (Ghoshi, 2002). Sampling frame which has the property that study can identify every single element and include any in the sample. The sample size for this research was obtained using the Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) formulae for a target population of less than 10,000 then the sample can be determined using the formula below.

The sample size employed for the identification of user from target population was scientifically computed as recommended by Mugenda and Mugenda as follows;

$$nf = \frac{n}{(1 + n/N)}$$

Where;

nf = Sample size (when the population is less than 10,000).

n = Sample size (when the population is less than 10,000); 384

N = Estimate of the population size; 228

Calculating the total sample size:

Therefore the sample size of the total population was calculated as follows

$$nf = \frac{384}{1 + \frac{384}{228}}$$

The study therefore sampled 143 project users. The study also use ratio sampling to calculate the distribution of respondents as indicated in table 3.2.

Table 3.2: Sampling Procedure and Sample Size

Target Group	Target Population	Ratio Sampling	Sample Size
Project Management Team	30	30/228*143	19
Project Users	198	198/228*143	124
Total	228		143

Source: Author, (2015)

3.4 Description of Research Instruments:

During the data collection periods, the researcher used questionnaires and interview schedule to gather the relevant information under the area of the study.

3.4.1 Questionnaires:

According to Kombo & Trump (2006), a questionnaire is a set of printed or written questions with a choice of answers, devised for the purposes of a survey or statistical study. Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) define a questionnaire as a form containing a set of questions, especially one addressed to a statistically significant number of subjects as a way of gathering information for a survey. While according to Cooper (1998) a questionnaire is a research instrument consisting of a series of questions and other prompts for the purpose of gathering information from respondents. The structured (closed-ended) questionnaires was used so as to get the uniform responses from the respondents. The closed questionnaire was formulated in form of a lickat scale were strongly agree (SA) was assigned a value of 5 being the highest on the scale while strongly disagree (SD) being the smallest at 1. The advantage of using this type of instrument is the ease that it accords the researcher during the analysis. Moreover questionnaires are easy to administer and economical to use in terms of time and money. The closed-ended questions provide a greater uniformity and more easily processed (Cooper, 1998). The structured questionnaires shall be accompanied by a list of all possible alternatives from which respondents select the suitable answer that describes their situation by simply ticking (Mugenda and Mugenda, 2003). The questionnaire was used to collect data from the users of the identified projects.

3.4.2 Interview Schedule:

According to Mugenda and Mugenda, (2003) a data collection technique in which an interviewer physically meets the respondent, reads them the same set of questions in a predetermined order, and records his or her response to each is known as an interview schedule. Kothari (2006) defines an interview schedule as the guide an interviewer uses when conducting a structured interview. It has two components: a set of questions designed to be asked exactly as worded, and instructions to the interviewer about how to proceed through the questions. The interview schedule is designed for the project management team. The schedules are designed to promote an opportunity for the researcher to establish a rapport with the respondents, explain in person the nature and purpose of the study. The intention is to elicit short and brief responses to the former questions and provide room for the responses in the respondents' words to the latter questions.

3.5 Validity and Reliability of Research Instruments:

3.5.1 Validity:

Validity was tested through expert opinion where the supervisor helped the researcher determine if the questionnaire is answering all the research objectives with an aim of ensuring that relevant data is collected. The opinion of the experts which in this case comprises of the supervisors played a very significant role in determining the validity and reliability of the research instruments (Kombo and Tromp, 2006).

3.5.2 Reliability:

Reliability is a measure of how consistent the results from a test are. The study involved the use of test re-test method. This is whereby the study involved the administration of questionnaires to two different respondents at different times. The method involves identifying a group of respondents to administer the first test, then afterwards another group is administered the same questionnaires. The two results are then correlated and variations are detected if any (Kombo and Tromp, 2006). This ensured questionnaires measure what they are supposed to measure.

The study employed the Cronbach's alpha coefficient to measure the internal consistency of the questionnaire. As a general rule a value of $\alpha > 0.7$ was determined reliable enough for each of the data sets where α is the item being tested for reliability.

3.6 Description of the Data Collection Procedures:

The researcher obtained a letter of introduction from Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and technology. The researcher then booked an appointment with the project management team to visit and administer the questionnaires. The

researchers then visited the area and personally administer the questionnaires. The respondent was guided on how to respond and was assured of confidentiality after which they were given the questionnaires to fill. The researcher also booked an appointment with the project management team to carry out the interviews.

3.7 Description of Data Analysis Procedures:

Mugenda & Mugenda (2003), defined data analysis as the process of creating order, structure and meaning to the mass of information collected. The data was analyzed using both qualitative and quantitative techniques. Qualitative analysis assisted in analyzing the interview schedules responses while quantitatively; descriptive statistics was employed in analyzing the questionnaire data. The Regression analysis technique was used to determine the relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variable. This technique was employed with the study findings and expected to assess the relationship between stakeholder's communication strategies and stakeholder's participation in of the identified projects.

The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS version 18) was used to run descriptive statistics such as frequencies and percentages so as to present the quantified data in form of research questions. The qualitative data generated from open ended questions was categorized in themes in accordance with research objectives and reported in narrative form along with quantitative presentation. The qualitative data was used to reinforce the quantitative data.

Multiple regressions was used to test hypotheses of the study. Once the relationship is estimated, it is possible to use the equation:

$$Y = \alpha + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \varepsilon$$

Where:

Y= the dependent variable (Stakeholder participation)

X = the independent variables - X_1 – Online Communication

X_2 – Formal organized meetings

X_3 – Informal Meetings

While:

$\beta_1, \beta_2, \beta_3$, are independents variable coefficients

α = the constant

ε = Error term

4. DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

4.1. Introduction:

This chapter seeks to analyze the data collected relating to the specific objectives of the study. The reliability results are presented together with the data. The interpretations and the

4.2 Descriptive Analysis of the Specific Information:

4.2.1 Communication Strategies to Enhance Stakeholder Participation:

The study sought to measure the effect of communication strategies used to enhance stakeholder participation. The responses were recorded and grouped separately according to Table 4.1 below.

Table 4.1 Respondents on Strategic Recruitment and Selection Process

		1	2	3	4	5	Tot.	Mean	SD
Adoption of online communication has resulted to sustainable projects	F	0.0	12.0	19.0	78.0	34.0	143	3.94	0.84
	%	0.0	8.4	13.3	54.5	23.8	100	78.74	
Formal organized meetings has enabled management team to devise strategies, make decisions and implement action	F	0.0	0.0	34.0	47.0	62.0	143	4.20	0.80
	%	0.0	0.0	23.8	32.9	43.4	100	83.92	
Informal meetings has provided social	F	0.0	31.0	12.0	74.0	26.0	143	3.66	1.01

control in an organization by influencing and regulating behavior	%	0.0	21.7	8.4	51.7	18.2	100	73.29	
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The finding of the study indicated that a majority of responses 83.9% (mean = 4.20) of responses were of the opinion that formal organized meetings has enabled management team to devise strategies, make decisions and implement action while 78.74% (mean=3.94) of responses were of the opinion that adoption of online communication has resulted to sustainable projects. Another 73.3 % (mean = 3.66) of respondents were of the opinion that informal meetings has provided social control in an organization by influencing and regulating behavior

This implies that meetings organized between project managers and stakeholders have given an opportunity the management team to devise strategies, make decisions and implement action. This means that formal meetings are avenues to identify project challenges, propose solutions and consultation with community stakeholders. Stakeholder engagement therefore is increasingly becoming a part of construction project practice in order to deliver excellent project outcomes. It means that stakeholder identification is a critical component of the initial scoping phase and should occur before an engagement plan is formulated and consultations begin. As each stakeholder usually has their own interest in the project which may cause different priorities, conflicts and dramatically increase the complexity of the situation. A well-managed stakeholder engagement process helps the project stakeholder to work together to increase comfort and quality of life, while decreasing negative environmental impacts and increasing the economic sustainability of the project. Stakeholder engagement should therefore be taken as a core element of any "sustainable development" plan.

The study done by Bal (2013) agrees with this findings that successful completion of construction projects is dependent on meeting the expectation of stakeholders and that managing relationships with stakeholders helps raise the consciousness of the project and make it better prepared to deal with changing stakeholder needs. The study entitled: "Stakeholder Engagement: Achieving Sustainability in the Construction Sector" focused on establishing effective stakeholder engagement process to achieve sustainable construction. The study employed an exploratory study involving in-depth structured interviews with UK-based practitioners representing some of the key stakeholders to a construction project were undertaken. Purposive sampling frame was constructed and 10 people involved in construction projects were selected to be interviewed. The data analysis procedure involved converting raw narrative data (interview notes, audiotapes) into partially processed data (transcripts) which were then coded (with the aid of NVIVO software). Key steps in the stakeholder engagement process were then developed from the coding process (Bal , 2013).

The study (Bal, 2013) further noted that on a construction project, different kinds of stakeholders are involved in different steps such as pre-design, design, bidding and construction. A formal identification process can be considered as a key step in drawing a line between the parties to be involved and the parties not to be involved. This implies that in terms of the sustainability mission of a project, as with other success criteria, stakeholders can be identified by their interest, power and attitude-which all relate to their potential impact on achieving the mission.

The study (Bal , 2013) also found out that it is important to relate the stakeholders to different sustainability-related targets, meaning that key stakeholders of the project understand the commitment to sustainable development and the objectives of the project. It is important that the project's objectives mesh with its "stakeholders" responsibility and skills and that they continue to fit stakeholders' interests as the project evolves, conditions change and the interdependencies of key systems, stakeholders and their objectives change. Taking into account all the sustainability-related criteria, stakeholders have a role in developing a sustainability strategy that delivers the best project benefits.

On prioritizing stakeholders, the study (Bal, 2013) found that ranking stakeholders is importance basing on the stakeholder's potential impact on project success-in terms of achieving sustainability-related targets. This means that all stakeholders are important, but they should be prioritized depending on the sustainability-related issues and their relevant characteristics, such as their ability to influence, impart knowledge, bring integrity and legitimacy. Stakeholders are prioritized through their power and legitimacy and the greater the priority accorded to a stakeholder group, the greater the efforts aimed at engaging the stakeholder groups. Stakeholders can be prioritized based on the following: those who have the highest decision-making power; those who contribute economically, socially and environmentally in terms of impact or are dependent on the organization; and those who are not linked directly to the project, but interested in seeing the project deliver a sustainable solution.

Bal (2013) in his findings indicated that stakeholders need to be managed; *i.e.* to manage their relationship implying that successful completion of construction projects is dependent on meeting the expectation of stakeholders. Managing relationships with stakeholders helps raise the consciousness of the project and make it better prepared to deal with changing stakeholder needs; it also makes it more able to respond efficiently and effectively to the difficulties that may arise or issues that need to be resolved. In this sense, stakeholders are a major source of uncertainty; a generic project risk management process framework provides a structure for a review of approaches to analyzing stakeholders and risk management issues and such a framework could be adapted to the sustainability context.

Another study conducted by Boschetti (2011) also concur with the above findings. The study entitled: The Gap between Theory and Practice of Stakeholder Participation: The case of Management of the Korle Lagoon, Ghana, tried to examine the role individuals and groups within the catchment of the lagoon play in the formulation and implementation of policies intended to manage the lagoon. The main instrument in the investigation was a survey with the administration of questionnaire.

The study revealed that it appears that exclusion additionally hampers implementation, whereby marginalization of stakeholders can lead to conflict and antagonism. Since January 2007, according to the study, the community played an increasingly important role in shaping the policy in the catchment of the lagoon through the participatory initiatives of civil society groups in the community. The projects are aimed at empowering community members to earn a good living and shift their dependence from the market located in the community. The study found out that some community members benefited from community to community exchanges either within Ghana or outside where they had the opportunity to observe, share and learn how their counterparts are coping with urban poverty, evictions and insecure tenure thus the study pointed out that there is the need to assess whether civil society is genuinely pursuing the interest of the community.

On impediments to the full participation of the Community, the study (Boschetti, 2011) found out that impediments to the full participation of the community in the Korle lagoon management falls within three groupings: impediments within the KLERP (agency), impediments within the Old Fadama community and impediments within the society. This means that obstacles to participation within the KLERP include low levels of communication and lack of information flow between the community and civil society on the one hand, and the government and KLERP contractors on the other hand.

One effectiveness of arrangements for settling disputes among stakeholders, the study revealed that arrangements for settling disputes among stakeholders of the lagoon do not appear to be effective given the low levels of communication and lack of information flow between the community and civil society on the one hand and the government and KLERP contractors on the other hand. Civil society proposed the establishment of an institution that will coordinate stakeholder groups' activities in the community, and ensuring regular stakeholder meetings. They further proposed that a federation of stakeholders associated with the problem could be constituted to regularly streamline the activities of the NGOs and foster regular communication with government in order to prevent duplication of functions and other institutional conflicts.

The study (Boschetti, 2011) concluded that the sustainability and the outcome of the social empowerment component of participation in the community depend on whether the following issues can be comprehensively addressed: Who is setting the agenda- Is it civil society or the community members themselves? What criteria are used to determine the quota of representation for the various ethnic groups on the team that negotiates with the government? Do all individuals and groups in the community have equal access to discussions, regardless of gender, ethnicity or social status?

The study (Boschetti, 2011) further concluded that there is lack of transparency, information flow and communication between the project implementing authority and the community, which is a barrier to participation. The fact that the Old Fadama community was not involved in designing the project and its outcomes constitutes an infraction on the procedural right of the members of the community. The community's resistance to KLERP might be a reaction to the abuse of their right. More so, the lack of access to critical documents and information weakens the participatory capacity and the bargaining position of the community, making the contributions of the community to the discussion unavoidably and merely speculative and contingent. It precludes the proposition of alternative ideas by the community at the negotiating table. This amounts to discrimination or participatory injustice (unfair and unequal treatment) and obstructs the freedom of expression of the members of the community (or their representatives) on the discursive platform.

Boschetti (2011) concluded that it is important to distinguish clearly a public relations approach from an approach designed to ascertain and incorporate the views of the community on issues related to the project. As a primary

stakeholder, the community should participate in the process, as of right, and not as a token gift offered to them. They should therefore be invited to the discursive terrain on the basis of the recognition that they are equal partners. It is only by having unfettered access to the discursive terrain that the community can exercise its procedural right.

4.2.2 Communication Systems Structures:

In an effort to measure the effect of current communication systems structure in place to support communication strategies, the responses were recorded and grouped separately according to table 4.2 below.

Table 4.2 Respondents on Current Communication Structures

		1	2	3	4	5	Tot	Mean	SD
Qualified persons working for the public relations and communications department	F	0.0	0.0	22.0	85.0	36.0	143	4.10	0.63
	%	0.0	0.0	15.4	59.4	25.2	100	82.0	
A robust public relation and communications department	F	0.0	4.0	34.0	67.0	38.0	143	3.97	0.79
	%	0.0	2.8	23.8	46.9	26.6	100	79.4	
Interconnected county platforms for communication including intranet and organizational emails	F	0.0	1.0	47.0	48.0	47.0	143	3.99	0.83
	%	0.0	0.7	32.9	33.6	32.9	100	79.7	
A lean organization structure / chain of command	F	1.0	0.0	18.0	99.0	25.0	143	4.03	0.60
	%	0.7	0.0	12.6	69.2	17.5	100	80.6	
A clear organizational communications policy	F	1.0	8.0	33.0	61.0	40.0	143	3.92	0.89
	%	0.7	5.6	23.1	42.7	28.0	100	78.3	
A strong ICT department to support communication platforms	F	0.0	8.0	34.0	57.0	44.0	143	3.96	0.88
	%	0.0	5.6	23.8	39.9	30.8	100	79.2	

The finding of the study revealed 82.0% (mean = 4.10) of responses were of the opinion that qualified persons working for the public relations and communications department, another 80.6% (mean = 4.03) of responses were of the opinion that a lean organization structure / chain of command, with another 79.7% (mean = 3.99) feeling that interconnected county platforms for communication including intranet and organizational emails support communication strategies. The study findings farther indicated that 79.4% (mean = 3.97) of the responses indicated that a robust public relation and communications department support communication strategies, another 79.2% (mean = 3.96) feeling that a strong ICT department support communication platforms with another 78.3% (mean = 3.92) feeling that clear organizational communications policy support communication strategies.

The finding implies that qualified persons working for the public relations and communications department is one of the communication structures that support communication strategy. This means that public relations competent officers have skills and knowledge on how to identify the required stakeholders and their respective needs, know how to strategically involve the public in information sharing such that the community feel that it is part of the ongoing development. Contemporary society requires public relations professionals who can deal with global interactions, relationships, and responsibilities and who can manage relationships among organizations and stakeholders in a global, digitalized world where issues and crises related to poor project governance have been common place. In the minds of most people, public relations has become institutionalized as a messaging activity whose purpose is to make organizations look good in the media or to sell products, usually through devious means, rather than as a management activity that improves relationships among stakeholders and organizations.

A study was conducted by Tench et al. (2013) on 'Communication Management Competencies for Practitioners' and whose objectives were to map and understand the actions and activities of communicators specifically in European landscape and to build knowledge and understanding of what they do, but also what skills and knowledge they need to develop to have a shared meaning and understanding of the practice.

Tench et al., (2013) noted that the annual European Communication Monitor survey was used as the platform to test the hypotheses of the project which related to the education, skills and competencies of communications practitioners. In depth interviews with practitioners were held to evaluate the components of knowledge, skills (hard and soft) and personal attributes that go to make up the competencies for the four defined communication roles.

The findings from the study (Tench et al., 2013) suggest and support the hypothesis that public relations and communication is a maturing discipline with many shared experiences but little organized life-long learning or evidence of recognized continuing professional development (CPD) pathways. There are on-going gaps and deficiencies in the development of the individuals as well as broad variation in how practitioners identify needs and access appropriate interventions. This presents numerous opportunities for deeper and on-going professional training and development to build consistency and support good practice in moving away from a hands-on, learning on-the-job approach to more focused knowledge acquisition and development.

The study (Tench et al., 2013) further revealed that that public relation practitioners had acquired the most important knowledge areas for their role on-the-job, in either their current or previous roles. This would appear to be logical given the business/company specific nature of the three most important knowledge areas. Learning by doing (the job) was perceived as very important and for some the only true way to gain and develop applied knowledge. This knowledge was not, however, acquired in isolation. The support of colleagues, role models, bosses and formal and informal mentors whilst on-the job was also acknowledged and, to a lesser extent, the importance of belonging to relevant networks and forums. Both senior and younger colleagues were acknowledged, (particularly those that were perceived as more Internet savvy). Involvement in cross team projects was another way in which knowledge had been acquired.

From the findings of the study (Tench et al., 2013) social media knowledge is an acknowledged weakness that people feel they need to improve in and the industry also needs to look closely at how it can foster intercultural relationships and cross-cultural working by setting up accredited and recognized programs of exchange, secondment and internship. Coaching and mentoring has a significant part to play in the development of communicators, as it potentially offers more formal, organized and supported career development that is both on-the-job and in-situ. This, together with committed involvement in networks and knowledge exchange activity and a review of the current content of more formal training/qualifications may help to bridge on-going and self-acknowledged gaps in the development of communication practitioners.

Tench et al. (2013) also concluded that models of coaching and mentoring within the sector need to be devised and shared in an attempt to offer more formal, organized and supported career development that is on-the-job and in-situ. This could involve internal and external schemes, which again could be certified or accredited by a professional association or body. The value of observing others and learning from them is noted. Networks and Forums are a recognized support or practitioners at senior and lower levels but there may well be a gap in the middle ranks where professionals are more guarded of sharing knowledge, experience and weaknesses (Tench et al., 2013).

4.2.3 County Funded Projects Success and Stakeholder Participation:

The study sought to measure the relation between the county funded projects success in relation to past stakeholder participation. The responses were recorded and grouped separately according to Table 4.3 below.

Table: 4.6. Respondents on Project Success on Stakeholder Participation

		1	2	3	4	5	Tot	Mean	SD
County rating is high on public	F	0.0	8.0	20.0	89.0	26.0	143	3.93	0.74
participation in projects and so is the development agenda of the county	%	0.0	5.6	14.0	62.2	18.2	100	78.6	
County bills and projects have stalled due to court orders resulting from failure of public participation	F	0.0	0.0	18.0	74.0	51.0	143	4.23	0.66
	%	0.0	0.0	12.6	51.7	35.7	100	84.6	
Projects with high stakeholder participation are never rejected by citizens	F	0.0	0.0	7.0	62.0	74.0	143	4.47	0.59
	%	0.0	0.0	4.9	43.4	51.7	100	89.4	

The finding of the study indicated that majority of responses 89.4% (mean = 4.47) were of the opinion that; Projects with high stakeholder participation are never rejected by citizens and another 84.6% (mean = 4.23) stating that county bills and projects have stalled due to court orders resulting from failure of public participation. The study findings also indicated

that 78.6% (mean = 3.93) agreed that county rating is high on public participation in projects and so is the development agenda of the county.

The major findings show that projects with high stakeholder participation are never rejected by citizens. This implies that when citizens are involved right from conception of the project then they will own the project and fight for its sustainability. Effective stakeholder engagement enables better planned and more informed policies, projects, programs and services. Stakeholder engagement can be mutually beneficial for the project management and stakeholders. For stakeholders, the benefits of engagement include the opportunity to contribute as experts in their field to policy and program development, have their issues heard and participate in the decision-making process.

A study conducted by Elhaut (2012) on 'Sustainability, the 'via crucis' of poverty reduction' is in harmony with these findings. The study conducted in a development project in UK aimed at establishing the role of community

Elhaut (2012) found out that most community members do not participate in projects since they are not given the opportunity during initial stages of planning. Project managers treat the community members as external contributors of which the study found that aspect to contribute negatively to the implementation of the project. The study further revealed that development projects have minimal site meetings that involved all the stakeholders. Development projects only involved the client and the contractor. On the success and sustainability of the project, projects succeed when the end user stakeholder is involved during implementation.

Elhaut (2012) posed that Community and stakeholder participation is essential throughout the planning and implementation process, and a communication strategy is needed to inform and engage the community, the politicians and the municipal administration. Involvement of people directly affected by planning proposals should begin in the initial planning stages. Ward committees and development forums representing community organizations and stakeholders with specific interests such as the business sector, landowners and service providers should be included. Information meetings and hearings in the early stages of the process serve to: present the intention to prepare a spatial plan; share the municipal vision, development principles and goals; hear community needs, aspirations and priorities and describe the process, including community participation.

The study (Elhaut, 2012) recommended that the client and contractor should consider engaging the community not only as a worker but also as a decision maker. Owning the project by the community enabled the project to be sustained.

A study done in Nigeria on infrastructural services (Oludimu, 2008) are in line with these findings that levels of community participation improves the chances of sustainable development in rural areas. The study indicated that lack of community participation during initial stages is one of the problems with development planning. This is due to the top-down approach dominating development planning. The study explains that the bottom-up approach promotes people-centered development since it focuses on people hence enhancing their capacity to influence the direction and implementation of the development process. The study concluded that stakeholders including community ought to be consulted and involved so that development project becomes sustainable and be of great help to these stakeholders.

4.2.4 Indicators of Stakeholder Participation:

In an effort to measure indicators of stakeholder participation, the responses were recorded and grouped separately according to table 4.7 below.

Table 4.7 Respondents on Indicators of Stakeholder Participation

		1	2	3	4	5	Total	Mean	SD
Participation	F	0	7	21	82	33	143	3.986	0.75978
	%	0.00	4.90	14.69	57.34	23.08	100	79.7	
Inquiries	F	0	2	25	77	39	143	4.0699	0.7086
	%	0.00	1.40	17.48	53.85	27.27	100	81.4	
Attendance	F	0	9	22	72	40	143	4	0.83075
	%	0.00	6.29	15.38	50.35	27.97	100	80.0	
Meetings	F	1	0	19	77	46	143	4.1678	0.70197
	%	0.70	0.00	13.29	53.85	32.17	100	83.4	

The finding of the study indicated that a majority of 83.4% (mean = 4.17) of responses were of the opinion that meeting is an indicator of level of stakeholder participation while 81.4% (mean=4.07) of responses were of the opinion that inquiries is an indicator of stakeholder participation. Another 79.7% (mean = 3.99) of respondents agreed that the participation is an indicator, while 80.0% (mean = 4.00) of respondents agreed that attendance is an indicator of stakeholder participation.

The major finding here is that meetings is a measure of stakeholder participation in county funded projects. This implies that the higher the number of meetings arranged the higher probability of success of that project due to higher participation of all stakeholders.

A study by Bal (2013) on Stakeholder Engagement: Achieving Sustainability in the Construction Sector agrees with the above findings. Bal (2013) noted that winning the hearts of the citizens by meeting with them regularly and ultimately gaining their trust and friendship may be the only way that regulators can promote new policies in communities where anti-government sentiment runs high. He further noted that although many promote meetings as a way to 'incorporate community values into decisions that might otherwise be dominated by a small elite', it appears that another, non-elected small elite can dominate a participatory process.

4.3 Overall Regression Model for the Effect of Communication Strategies on Stakeholder Participation.

On determining that all the variables of communication strategies had an effect on stakeholder participation the study went ahead to compute an overall regression model indicating how the variables interacted in the study.

The F test provides an overall test of significance of the fitted regression model. The F value indicates that all the variables in the equation are important hence the overall regression is significant.

The ANOVA table for the regression indicated that the results computed using the regression model indicated significant value of $p=0.000$ meaning that the regression model had been computed well and not by chance.

Table 4.8 Overall Regression Model

Model Summary						
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	R	Std. Error of the Estimate	
1	0.840	0.705	0.699		0.288	
ANOVA ^b						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	27.55	3	9.18	110.91	0.00
	Residual	11.51	139	0.08		
	Total	39.05	142			
a. Predictors: (Constant), Current projects, Communication strategies, Communication system structures						
b. Dependent Variable: Stakeholder participation						
Coefficients ^a						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients	Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
				Beta		
1	(Constant)	0.526	0.204		2.572	0.011
	Communication strategies	0.336	0.063	0.342	5.312	0.000
	Communication system structures	0.749	0.121	0.733	6.205	0.000
	Current Projects	-0.191	0.122	-0.181	-1.564	0.120
a. Dependent Variable: Stakeholder participation						

Y (Stakeholder participation) = 0.526 + 0.733 (Communication system structures) + 0.342 (communication strategies) - 0.181 (Current projects) + 0.204 (error)

This is interpreted to mean that communication system structures contributes much to the stakeholder participation by over 73.3% followed by communication strategies contributing by 34.2%. Current projects contributes negatively by 18.1%.

This implies that existing communication structures allows better stakeholder participation during project implementation thus success of the project. It could mean that existing communication structures allows not only project managers and client representatives but also the local community to give their opinion on project development. This means that project managers and the client including local community work together to achieve the objectives of the project. Every person plays its role for the achievement of such goals. For project managers the findings could imply that they share all the necessary information on the progress of the project hence any challenge encountered is address immediately and for the client who is the county representative plays its role by ensuring that all the initial design of the project and maybe other developments in the project design are adhered to so as to achieve the standard quality. County representative also ensures that all resources required are availed to ease implementation of the project.

These findings were in harmony with Tench, et al (2013) findings which noted that a well-established public relations and communications department with qualified personnel allows better opportunity for stakeholder participation. This means that the existing communication structures having competent officers have skills and knowledge on how to identify the required stakeholders and their respective needs, know how to strategically involve the public in information sharing such that the community feel that it is part of the ongoing development. Contemporary society requires public relations professionals who can deal with global interactions, relationships, and responsibilities and who can manage relationships among organizations and stakeholders in a global, digitalized world where issues and crises related to poor project governance have been common place. In the minds of most people, public relations has become institutionalized as a messaging activity whose purpose is to make organizations look good in the media or to sell products, usually through devious means, rather than as a management activity that improves relationships among stakeholders and organizations.

4.4 Hypothesis Testing using the Multiple Regression Model:

From the regression model computed in table 4.8, the research hypotheses were tested using the significance level of the coefficients; the research aimed to test the hypothesis with an aim of accepting whether there was any effect of communication strategies on stakeholder participation.

The research hypothesis for the study included;

HO1: Communication strategies has no significant effect on stakeholder participation

Research results rejected the hypothesis ($\beta = 0.342$, $p = 0.000$).

The regression results in table 4.8 shows that communication strategies has an effect on stakeholder participation with a beta coefficient of 0.342, the effect is significant at ($p=0.000$).

These results imply that a communication strategy plays a more significant role in determining stakeholder participation. It means therefore that project managers facilitate more on formal and informal site meeting to pass information to other stakeholder participation. More formal and informal meetings could leads to avenues where stakeholders can share their vital information relating to the project. For example, local community who is the end beneficiary of the project could have vital way of providing cheap labour for project implementers and so they have to be involved.

The study findings is in harmony with Boschetti (2011) findings which revealed that exclusion of stakeholders in decision making through formal and informal meetings hampers implementation. This marginalization of stakeholders can lead to conflict and antagonism. According to the study (Boschetti, 2011), the community plays an increasingly important role in shaping the policy in the catchment of the lagoon through the participatory initiatives of civil society groups in the community. The projects are aimed at empowering community members to earn a good living and shift their dependence from the market located in the community. The study found out that some community members benefited from community to community exchanges either within Ghana or outside where they had the opportunity to observe, share and learn how their counterparts are coping with urban poverty, evictions and insecure tenure thus the study pointed out that there is the need to assess whether civil society is genuinely pursuing the interest of the community.

On impediments to the full participation of the Community, the study (Boschetti, 2011) found out that impediments to the full participation of the community in the Korle lagoon management falls within three groupings: impediments within the KLERP (agency), impediments within the Old Fadama community and impediments within the society. This means that obstacles to participation within the KLERP include low levels of communication and lack of information flow between the community and civil society on the one hand, and the government and KLERP contractors on the other hand.

One effectiveness of arrangements for settling disputes among stakeholders, the study (Boschetti, 2011) revealed that arrangements for settling disputes among stakeholders of the lagoon do not appear to be effective given the low levels of communication and lack of information flow between the community and civil society on the one hand and the government and KLERP contractors on the other hand. Civil society proposed the establishment of an institution that will coordinate stakeholder groups' activities in the community, and ensuring regular stakeholder meetings. They further proposed that a federation of stakeholders associated with the problem could be constituted to regularly streamline the activities of the NGOs and foster regular communication with government in order to prevent duplication of functions and other institutional conflicts.

The study (Boschetti, 2011) concluded that the sustainability and the outcome of the social empowerment component of participation in the community depend on whether the following issues can be comprehensively addressed: Who is setting the agenda- Is it civil society or the community members themselves? What criteria are used to determine the quota of representation for the various ethnic groups on the team that negotiates with the government? Do all individuals and groups in the community have equal access to discussions, regardless of gender, ethnicity or social status?

The study (Boschetti, 2011) further concluded that there is lack of transparency, information flow and communication between the project implementing authority and the community, which is a barrier to participation. The fact that the Old Fadama community was not involved in designing the project and its outcomes constitutes an infraction on the procedural right of the members of the community. The community's resistance to KLERP might be a reaction to the abuse of their right. More so, the lack of access to critical documents and information weakens the participatory capacity and the bargaining position of the community, making the contributions of the community to the discussion unavoidably and merely speculative and contingent. It precludes the proposition of alternative ideas by the community at the negotiating table. This amounts to discrimination or participatory injustice (unfair and unequal treatment) and obstructs the freedom of expression of the members of the community (or their representatives) on the discursive platform.

HO2: Communication systems structures has no significant effect on stakeholder participation Research results rejected the hypothesis ($\beta = 0.733$, $p = 0.000$).

The research results rejected the null hypothesis one which stated that: communication systems structures has no significant effect on stakeholder participation. The results indicated that there was a significant relationship ($p = 0.000$) between communication system structures and stakeholder participation.

This implies that project managers have put in place structures which that strategically improves communication between stakeholders. It means therefore that such structures such as qualified public relation officers and ICT department has contributed much to flow of vital information amongst participants. For example qualified public relation officers have the knowledge and skills on how to identify and meet the needs of each and every stakeholder hence enables the project manager to pass the right information to the right stakeholder. It is through this public officer to related well with the local community and let them know the progress of the project.

A study by Tench et al. (2013) was in line with this findings that communication structures are components which are significant for the success of project implementation. The study noted that the role of system structures is to bring together the experts, contractors, client, local leaders and local community. A well-established structure in an organization allows each group to play its role. This therefore gives room for consultation whenever one is in doubt of is role or having a challenging issue to be addressed. Tench et al. posed that initially when communication structures did not existed, stakeholders could raise their issues to the wrong person hence causing friction between themselves therefore dragging the implementation of project.

Brett (2002) also emphasized the importance of public relations department in an organization as communication structures. Brett argued that performance of an organization improved when the staff and stakeholders understand the existence and proper usage of public relations department, that these departments in an organization allows the flow of information within the organization i.e. from one department to another and from juniors to the top management of an organization. So whenever there are initiatives in an organization, management will not be in any doubt for implementation will be done as planned.

HO3: Success of current projects has no significant effect on stakeholder participation The research results accepted the hypothesis ($\beta = -0.181$, $p = 0.000$).

The results accepted the null hypothesis that says: success of current projects has no significant effect on stakeholder participation. The results indicated that there was no significant relationship ($p = 0.120$) between success of current project and stakeholder participation.

This could imply that success of projects doesn't mean that stakeholders were involved but rather means that many other factors could have contributed to the success of that particular project. Success of projects does not affect its implementation but only affects its evaluation and monitoring for: 1) better stakeholder participation 2) future better allocation of resources and 3) project sustainability implementation plan.

The study findings were in line with the findings of Elhaut (2012) that success of projects is only achieved through a number stages including involvement of stakeholders from inception of the project. Implementation is another stage that requires labour from local community meaning that local community is an important group of stakeholder which determines implementation in terms of time, cost and success. Elhaut (2012) therefore noted that success of the project comes after all preliminary stages are done successfully. Success of projects is not so significant for implementation but only significant for project monitoring, evaluation and reporting. This therefore will help in planning for project sustainable plan such as environmental impact assessment.

5. SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction:

This chapter will discuss the summary of the findings, the conclusions and the recommendations of the study.

5.1 Summary of Findings:

The study sought to measure the effect of communication strategies used to enhance stakeholder participation.

The finding of the study indicated that a majority of responses 83.9% (mean = 4.20) of responses were of the opinion that formal organized meetings has enabled management team to devise strategies, make decisions and implement action implying that meetings organized between project managers and stakeholders have given an opportunity the management team to devise strategies, make decisions and implement action. This means that formal meetings are avenues to identify project challenges, propose solutions and consultation with community stakeholders. Stakeholder engagement therefore is increasingly becoming a part of construction project practice in order to deliver excellent project outcomes. It means that stakeholder identification is a critical component of the initial scoping phase and should occur before an engagement plan is formulated and consultations begin.

In an effort to measure the effect of current communication systems structure put in place to support communication strategies, the finding of the study revealed 82.0% (mean = 4.10) of responses were of the opinion that qualified persons working for the public relations and communications department are supposed to be put in place meaning that public relations competent officers have skills and knowledge on how identifying the required stakeholders and their respective needs, know how to strategically involve the public in information sharing such that the community feel that it is part of the ongoing development.

The study sought to measure the relation between the county funded projects success in relation to past stakeholder participation. The major findings show that projects with high stakeholder participation are never rejected by citizens. This implies that when citizens are involved right from conception of the project then they will own the project and fight for its sustainability. Effective stakeholder engagement enables better planned and more informed policies, projects, programs and services. Stakeholder engagement can be mutually beneficial for the project management and stakeholders. For stakeholders, the benefits of engagement include the opportunity to contribute as experts in their field to policy and program development, have their issues heard and participate in the decision-making process.

The research also aimed to test the hypothesis with an aim of accepting whether there was any effect of communication strategies on stakeholder participation.

The regression results shows that communication strategies has an effect on stakeholder participation with a beta coefficient of 0.342, the effect is significant at ($p=0.000$), implying that communication strategies plays a more significant role in determining stakeholder participation. It means therefore that project managers facilitate more on formal and informal site meeting to pass information to other stakeholder participation. More formal and informal meetings could leads to avenues where stakeholders can share their vital information relating to the project.

The research results also rejected the null hypothesis one which stated that: communication systems structures has no significant effect on stakeholder participation. The results indicated that there was a significant relationship ($p = 0.000$) between communication system structures and stakeholder participation implying that project managers have put in place structures which that strategically improves communication between stakeholders.

The results accepted the null hypothesis that says: success of current projects has no significant effect on stakeholder participation. The results indicated that there was no significant relationship ($p = 0.000$) between success of current project and stakeholder participation.

5.2 Conclusion:

Successful completion of construction projects is dependent on meeting the expectation of stakeholders and managing relationships with stakeholders, thus need for regular formal meetings between the contractor, project client and stakeholders. This means that formal meetings are avenues to identify project challenges, propose solutions and consultation with community stakeholders. Stakeholder engagement therefore is increasingly becoming a part of construction project practice in order to deliver excellent project outcomes. It means that stakeholder identification is a critical component of the initial scoping phase and should occur before an engagement plan is formulated and consultations begin. As each stakeholder usually has their own interest in the project which may cause different priorities, conflicts and dramatically increase the complexity of the situation. A well-managed stakeholder engagement process helps the project stakeholder to work together to increase comfort and quality of life, while decreasing negative environmental impacts and increasing the economic sustainability of the project. Stakeholder engagement should therefore be taken as a core element of any "sustainable development" plan.

The study further concludes that public relations and communication department are very significant in project implementation. These structures should be put in place and run by qualified personnel since they have skills and knowledge on how identifying the required stakeholders and their respective needs, know how to strategically involve the public in information sharing such that the community feel that it is part of the ongoing development. Contemporary society requires public relations professionals who can deal with global interactions, relationships, and responsibilities and who can manage relationships among organizations and stakeholders in a global, digitalized world where issues and crises related to poor project governance have been common place. In the minds of most people, public relations has become institutionalized as a messaging activity whose purpose is to make organizations look good in the media or to sell products, usually through devious means, rather than as a management activity that improves relationships among stakeholders and organizations.

Lastly the study conclude that public stakeholders should be involved right from conception of the project so that they own the project and fight for its sustainability. Effective stakeholder engagement enables better planned and more informed policies, projects, programs and services. Stakeholder engagement can be mutually beneficial for the project management and stakeholders. For stakeholders, the benefits of engagement include the opportunity to contribute as experts in their field to policy and program development, have their issues heard and participate in the decision-making process.

5.3 Recommendations of the Study:

The research made the following research recommendations.

The study established that development projects in Uasin Gishu does not use effectively online communication in stakeholder participation. Online communication in this study entails the use of internet in passing information from the implementers to the local community. For the success of the project the study recommend that county government ought to appreciate the digital way of communication since duration of passage of information affects implementation. During implementation of county projects technical challenges can encountered which requires quick decision making from the client and stakeholders. The delay could result to delay in implementation hence affecting project time schedule.

The study also established that there's no clear organizational communications policy that guide project supervisors and management on communication with stakeholders. A situation where there's no communication policy creates a situation where every management team innovate their own way of communication. This may be interpreted negatively by the stakeholders hence causing friction between the two groups hence negative effects to the project implementation. The study therefore recommend that a clear communication policy is put in place by the county government so that project management and stake holders could have a basis of reaching to each other.

The study also established that Uasin Gishu county projects is rated low on public participation. This implies that the county does not involve much in public participation or if they engage the public, then the existing strategies are not effective. The study therefore recommend that the county development department put in place strategies such as communication structures including public relation department with qualified persons. Public relation department will engage the contractors selected in stakeholder participation.

5.4 Suggestions for Further Studies:

The researcher recommends the following areas for further studies:

The effects of formal organized site meetings on stakeholder participation during project implementation

The role of local leaders on community participation in implementation of a project

Effects of local leaders on the success of a development project.

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